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AUTHOR Marshall, Charles B.
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ABSTRACT

Home study as an effective method of adult education is discussed. Results of several major university research studies are cited and examples of the use of home study by labor unions, professional and trade groups, the federal government, and the armed services are presented. Support for the method by legislative and regulatory bodies (such as the Illinois legislature, the states of California and Pennsylvania, and the passage by Congress of the Educational Amendment Act, Title III, Section 104) and increasing use of home study programs in colleges and universities (such as the University of Oklahoma, Goddard College, and the National University Education Association) is reported. It is explained that home study throughout the world (in such countries as the U.S.S.R., Sweden, Australia, Holland, Great Britain, and in Third World Countries) has also increased. Included is a functional analysis of home study and residence education. (BD)

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# RESEARCH REPORT

ED163884

# The EFFECTIVENESS of HOME STUDY

by Charles B. Marshall, B.A., M.A., J.D.
Vice President, Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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- Major University Studies
- Industrial, Professional and Government Use of Home Study
- Legislative Recognition of Correspondence Study
- Expanding Collegiate Recognition
- Home Study Throughout the World

There are five basic sources of proof that correspondence study is an effective method of adult education:

- Formal academic studies
- Widespread use of home study programs by management, labor and government
- Considerable legislation on behalf of home study
- Increasing use of home study programs by America's resident colleges and universities
- Strong acceptance of home study in foreign countries

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## MAJOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES

Dr. Robert E. Crump, in a Columbia University dissertation, "Correspondence and Class Extension in Oklahoma," measured the comparative performance of extension students.[1] In Dr. Crump's experiment, resident and correspondence students were given the same battery of final examinations. The results of this research indicated that differences between the instructional methods were *insignificant* as far as ultimate attainment was concerned.

Dr. Dale W. Dysinger, in an article entitled "Performance of Correspondence Study Students,"[2] revealed the results of a detailed experiment concerning the study habits and progress of a small but very tightly controlled group. A University of Wisconsin instructor taught an introductory psychology course. He then prepared an identical correspondence course. The 41 correspondence students completed the program with attainments which *equaled or surpassed* the achievements of 167 classroom students. The study concluded that the results of the correspondence course were at least the equivalent of residence instruction.

**Home Study Students Prepare More Thoroughly**

In another inquiry, "A Study of the Relative Ability and Achievement of Class Extension, Correspondence and Resident Students at the University of Kentucky," Dr. Arthur Larson discovered, after extensive analysis, that correspondence students achieved levels which compared favorably to resident students, as demonstrated on reading tests, vocabulary tests, and written appraisals of the faculty. The Larson study also determined that "Correspondence students spend more time in subject preparation than do resident students."[3]

Writing in the *Journal of Educational Research*, Dr. Emil L. Larson corroborated these findings in an article entitled "The Comparative Quality of Work Done by Students in Residence and Correspondence Work." He again proved that home study students attained as high a standard as resident students.[4] A standard test was given to 56 University of Arizona students who had taken both residence and correspondence courses. It revealed that the grades earned in correspondence courses were slightly higher than those earned by the same students in residence courses. Professor Larson theorized that the superior achievement of the correspondence students might have resulted from their having selected subjects in which they had a special interest and individual aptitude.

In another survey, "The Effectiveness of Correspondence Study,"[5] a comparison of academic achievement also showed higher correspondence student performance. Dr. Feig, the researcher, hypothesized that the superiority of the extension students might have been the result of their greater maturity and personal discipline.

Results of another examination of the home study method, "Completion Rates and Achievements of Students in Supervised Correspondence Study,"[6] demonstrated that correspondence course achievements equaled resident school attainment.

Dr. Gayle B. Childs, of the University of Nebraska, compared a group of mathematics students who had been exposed to home study with a group who hadn't.[7] He concluded that "pupils who have studied mathematics by correspondence in high school are, on the average, likely to succeed somewhat better than those students of comparable ability who have not had this experience." Professor Childs asserted that the development of correspondence study "has made possible, for the first time in our history, the actual realization of the goal of universally available secondary education. Its growth, its great diversity, its wide acceptance, its healthy vitality, and its continuing proliferation into new areas and new fields attest to the fact that it fills its role superbly."[8]

## INDUSTRIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND GOVERNMENT USE OF HOME STUDY

One of the major users of home study, the Republic Steel Corporation, has employed correspondence courses to train apprentices since 1947. Republic Steel has also used correspondence courses for training machinists, tool and die makers, electricians, and mechanical and electrical draftsmen. Of 340 graduates of home study courses, over 20 percent have attained supervisory positions. A company spokesman noted: "These studies are well adapted to our needs. One apprentice at a time may begin training. He does not have to wait for a group to form, nor does he have to work on the same shift with other apprentices. What's more, he is able to progress at his own speed through the course."[9]

**Labor Unions**

Labor unions have also benefited from correspondence instruction. The International Typographical Union has been using correspondence programs to train apprentices for over 50 years. Today each International Typographical Union apprentice must complete a series of correspondence studies especially prepared by the union's educational specialists. The International Printing and Pressmen and Assistants Union of North America, which offers similar training, currently has over 5,000 apprentices in correspondence training.

**Professional and Trade Groups**

In addition, thousands of companies[10] have entered into a wide range of business training agreements[11] with home study schools. Professor Ossian MacKenzie points out that professional and trade associations were among the first to recognize the advantages of correspondence courses. He notes that the American Institute of Banking holds home study in high regard.

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Its Executive Council reported to its membership: "Your committee would emphasize the importance of correspondence instruction. It overshadows every other instrumentality that could be brought into operation."[12] Dr. MacKenzie also notes the emphasis placed on home study by the Insurance Institute of America, the International City Managers Association, the American Academy of Opthalmology, the American Society of Abdominal Surgeons, the American Dietetic Association, the American Hotel/Motel Association, and many similar groups.

**Federal Government**

The Federal government has also been making greater use of correspondence study for training employees. LaSalle Extension University, for example, has a special program in Training of Law for Appellate Conferees, which trains senior tax administrators of the Internal Revenue Service. LaSalle has also offered Real Estate Training to the Department of the Interior, as well as law training for adjudicators of the Veterans Administration. When all of its programs are considered, the largest user of correspondence instruction is the Federal government, whose military agencies provide home study programs to over one million service personnel.

**Armed Services**

The Extension Course Institute, located in Montgomery, Alabama, has over 300,000 Air Force personnel enrolled in required home study programs. The Commandant sums up the results of correspondence study in describing the Air Force ECI graduate: "He will be trained for his job. No doubt about that . . . Uncle Sam wants you, but he wants you trained."[13]

The Navy's Correspondence Course Center in New York also has over 300,000 enrollments. Its commander attests, "The correspondence course has proven a valuable tool for the Navy. It has put the knowledge of all Navy subjects and ratings within the reach of all officers and men, on active and inactive duty, who desire to improve and maintain their professional qualifications."[14]

## LEGISLATIVE RECOGNITION OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDY

In addition to increased recognition of home study by business, labor and government, many legislative and regulatory bodies have shown strong support for this method.

**Illinois**

In 1969, the Illinois legislature amended the statutes to enable a correspondence student to attain a college degree exclusively via home study. LaSalle Extension University was the first school to apply. In May of 1970, LaSalle requested approval for a Bachelor's Degree and several Associate Degrees. LaSalle became the first home study school to be approved by the Advisory Council on Degree Granting Institutions and by the Office of Education of the State of Illinois. This empowered LaSalle to issue both Associate Degrees and the Bachelor of Science Degree in Commerce and Social Studies.

**Other States**

California and Pennsylvania have recently amended their laws to allow extension schools to grant degrees. The State of Louisiana is currently considering the matter, as are other states.

(Continued on page 6)

## FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS of HOME STUDY, RESIDENCE EDUCATION

**The general theory of home study may conveniently be broken down into seven stages: (1) basic instruction/information (2) elaboration and explanation (3) motivation (4) reinforcement and review (5) measurement of learning (6) completion of learning (7) application of learning.**

**Each of the first five functions of home study equates to the five major steps of resident instruction. The last two steps—completion of learning and application of learning—are unique advantages of the home study method.**

**The following chart explores how the functions of home study and classroom education are administered. It shows how home study accomplishes the same teaching functions of classroom study, although in a different way.**

# FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS of HOME STUDY, RESIDENCE EDUCATION

| TEACHING FUNCTION | CLASSROOM | HOME STUDY | EVIDENCE | CONCLUSION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 BASIC INSTRUCTION INFORMATION | Widely recognized and standard textbooks are used, thus assuring a comprehensive and acceptable presentation of the required curriculum. | Materials are based on standard texts and written for a specific audience. Home study authors and editors have a detailed profile analysis of their prospective students. | "Performance of Correspondence Study Students," Dr. Dale W. Dysinger, *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 28, pages 387-388. | Home study courses are based on restatements of texts which are widely used in resident schools. They are closely keyed to the specific needs of home study students, delivering relevant, useful material. |
| 2 ELABORATION AND EXPLANATION | Elaboration depends mainly on classroom lectures, which require the student's physical presence. Occasionally instructors may grant individual student conferences to assist with various special problems. | Study guides and lectures are uniquely designed for the special needs of thousands of students. Analysis of areas where students need additional information assists editors in making material more relevant. | "The Comparative Quality of Work Done by Students in Correspondence and Residence Work," Dr. Emil L. Larson, *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 25, pages 105-109, Education Resources Information Center, U.S. Office of Education. | Home study is convenient, flexible and relatively inexpensive. It does not depend upon the student's physical presence or particular time schedules. Study at home does not interrupt the student at work. |
| 3 MOTIVATION | Classroom motivation can be a strength of resident study, especially when there is an outstanding teacher. However, the level and quality of motivation may be inconsistent since it will vary from teacher to teacher. | Motivation is consistently incorporated into home study text materials. It is also expanded by personal comments on graded assignments along with helpful model answers. Motivational letters are sent out regularly. | *The Effectiveness of Correspondence Study*, Dr. Chester A. Feig, Pennsylvania State University, Education Resources Information Center, U.S. Office of Education. | Home study delivers motivation in a manner different from resident study, but does so with a high degree of consistency. |
| 4 REINFORCEMENT AND REVIEW | The student may ask a question in class, receiving a direct response from the instructor. The student may also engage in discussions with fellow students who share similar concerns and problems. | The student writes his question, defining it properly, and sends it to the school. Each question receives a personal, detailed reply. Self-quizzes in study guides provide written answers for permanent reference and review. | "Training By Mail," Mrs. Patricia Marshall, *Manpower Magazine*, U.S. Department of Labor, Vol. 2, No. 3. | Students gain strength by being obliged to define their own questions. They are also able to study written answers, keeping them for future review. They may also have job-related dialogue with fellow employees and supervisors. |
| 5 MEASUREMENT OF LEARNING | Learning is sometimes measured by a mid-term and a final examination, for which a grade is given and placed upon the official records of the educational institution. Classroom quizzes, both written and oral, may also measure learning. | A series of written examinations, evaluated personally and supplemented with model solution replies, measure learning frequently. The student is not allowed to progress any substantial amount without complete understanding of the material covered. | *Correspondence Instruction in the United States*, McKenzie et al., The Carnegie Series in American Education, McGraw-Hill. | Home study measures the learning experience at frequent intervals, never allowing students to proceed substantially without checking their understanding. Misunderstandings are corrected in writing and correct answers provided. |
| 6 COMPLETION OF LEARNING | Usually in residential education, the learning process formally ends with the assignment and the recording of a grade, provided the grade is above the minimum passing level. | After every test, *learning continues* until the student attains a thorough grasp of the material. Review of the returned, graded paper and mastery of the model solution are an intrinsic part of the studies. | This function of home study offers students an "extra-mile" teaching service not provided by residence study. | No "learning gap" occurs in home study. After receiving a grade, the student is expressly assigned the review of any part of the curriculum for which a perfect score has not been achieved. |
| 7 APPLICATION AND USE OF LEARNING | Learning is applied at a substantial time interval after students complete their resident training. Unless students happen to be concurrently employed, they usually finish their classroom studies and then seek employment. Some students may use resident training (especially night school) directly on the job; most students apply their learning after they find work. | The home study student frequently applies on the job what has been learned the night before. "Learn it today, apply it tomorrow," is a major motto of correspondence educators in corporate organizations. Because home study programs have specific career or vocation goals, learning tends to relate specifically to the job and may be applied immediately. | "Must Home Study Be A Stepchild?" Dr. Robert Allen, Dean of Continuing Education, University of Miami, *The Home Study Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, page 15. | Home study is personal, applied education. It is designed for immediate use, *direct application*, and is totally practical. |

Summary: both resident study and home study strive toward common educational goals, differing chiefly in methodology. Whether a company or an individual selects the classroom method or the home study technique to achieve training and educational goals will depend mainly on the trainee or prospective student's personal circumstances. For those persons who cannot be spared from their employment by day or their homes at night, home study offers a strong alternative method for achieving education and personal growth.

**Federal Legislation**

While state governments are extending greater recognition to correspondence study, the Federal government has been even more enthusiastic in endorsing it. In 1972, Congress expressly provided that, as a condition to obtaining certain federal funds, the states must *recognize* and *use* proprietary educational institutions, *including* home study. As part of this enactment, Congress passed the Educational Amendment Act, Title III, Section 404, which authorized the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to improve post-secondary education by affirmatively assisting private schools, *including* home study institutions.[15] Operating under this legislation, the *Fund For The Improvement of Post-Secondary Education* has recently awarded a $42,500.00 grant to a home study school to develop standards for home study degree-granting programs.[16]

As far back as 1955, under Public Laws 82-550 and 85-864, Congress had provided for the establishment of national accreditation for private home study schools. In 1959, the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council was officially listed by the U.S. Office of Education as "a nationally recognized accrediting agency."

**Armed Service Recognition**

Perhaps the most forceful example of federal recognition of correspondence study is contained in a pair of military regulations which expressly provide that the graduate of an accredited high school home study course shall be considered the full equivalent of the graduate of a public resident high school.

The U.S. Navy, after reviewing the comparative attainments of home study and resident school graduates, ruled: "Any applicant who has successfully completed the high school course at a private home study (correspondence) school, which is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council, is considered a High School Graduate."[17]

The U.S. Air Force has provided: "Any applicant who has successfully completed the high school course at a private home study (correspondence) school, which is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council, is acceptable."[18]

So there is an emerging pattern of consistent recognition of home study as an effective educational delivery system by American scholars, business, labor, government and Congress.

## EXPANDING COLLEGIATE RECOGNITION

Still further recognition has come from America's resident colleges and universities. The National University Education Association, which only five years ago had 62 members, now has 73 members offering home study programs. Even more significant is the increase in the *variety* of courses offered by resident colleges and universities. While the membership in NUEA has increased by approximately 15 percent, the number of courses available has more than doubled.[19]

Among the correspondence programs offered by traditional resident schools, there is the University of Oklahoma's Bachelor of Liberal Studies, which allows all four years of study to be done by correspondence, except for a 13-week residence.

Goddard College requires only four weeks of residence for each year of its approved correspondence program.[20]

Today, many American colleges and universities will accept up to 30 semester hours of correspondence credit toward a degree.[21] The acceptance of home study, therefore, has been demonstrated in several ways:

- By a large number of professional academic studies
- By the use of correspondence courses by business, labor and government organizations
- By new enabling legislation in such states as California, Illinois and Pennsylvania making it possible to offer college degrees through home study
- By an expansion of the correspondence course offered by the National University Extension Association, as well as by a substantial increase in the membership of that group

## HOME STUDY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

**U.S.S.R.**

Of the approximately three million students involved in higher education in the Soviet Union, one and one-half million—approximately 50 percent—are correspondence students taught by the same teachers as resident students and who enjoy strong government subsidy of their educational programs. In the Soviet Union, the student

may go as far as a Doctoral Degree via correspondence, as a result of the formal incorporation of correspondence study into higher education by legislative enactment.[22]

**Sweden**

In Sweden, the Ministry of Education reports enrollments of over 300,000 persons in correspondence courses annually. These programs are subsidized by the Swedish government, which has long used extension studies as a method of continuing adult education.[23]

**Australia**

Because of its geographic spread, Australia has long made use of correspondence studies, especially since the end of World War II. The Australian government has established a formal system of correspondence education for primary and secondary school levels. Over a period of years, the Australian educational authorities have carefully measured the progress of the students enrolled in home study as opposed to those in resident institutions. The official report of the Australian authorities indicated: "A comparison of the results in the same examinations of correspondence students and resident students at the University of New England (Australia) over the first decade of correspondence teaching, showed that there was no difference between the pass rates of external and internal students."[24]

**Holland**

In Holland, correspondence courses are officially accepted by the government in preparation for licensing tests. Over a period of decades, the Dutch government has indicated that the passing rates for correspondence students and resident students are approximately equal in courses preparing for such diverse licensed positions as insurance agent, insurance broker, sales representative, public administrator, municipal administrator, etc.[25]

**England**

As early as 1858, the University of London provided for external degrees, which "quietly dispensed with the requirement of attendance at an approved institution, and thereafter the University accepted as candidates all who presented themselves for examination, provided of course that they had passed the matriculation examination and had paid their fees."[26]

Britain's Open University became a subject of world-wide discussion when it was granted a Parliamentary charter in 1969 and commenced its program in 1971. While the university was founded with television having a major role in the educational process, "now this has been substituted by other means of instruction, among them background reading, correspondence teaching, including written tests graded by a tutor or a computer, self-assessment tests, and radio broadcasts."[27]

## HOME STUDY IS PERSONAL LEARNING

**In her book, *Teaching by Correspondence*, Professor Renee F. Erdos summed up the nature of correspondence education:**

> **These generally accepted principles throw upon those who teach by correspondence, no less than upon teachers using any other method, the clearly defined responsibilities of teaching in general. They must motivate their students. They must design exercises adapted to the level of the student which will stimulate him, give purposeful practice, repetition and reinforcement, and provide an opportunity to apply the principles he has learned in previous situations.[29]**

**Dr. Gayle B. Childs has indicated how correspondence education fulfills the task noted above in a two-phase process. He observed:**

> **The first part of the process is carried forward by the syllabus or study guide. The syllabus bears the major responsibility for establishing objectives, determining learning experiences, and indicating instructional materials to be used. A good syllabus gives direction, explains, supplements, illustrates, provides for review, stimulates interest, and encourages self-evaluation. Finally, it provides some means for the student to submit to a correspondence study instructor evidence of the extent to which effective learning has taken place. This evidence may be in the form of written answers to specific questions, an original essay, a completed dress in a homemaking course, a report of an experiment in chemistry, or a transcribed letter in shorthand . . . It is at this point that the second part of the correspondence study teaching process begins. The teacher who receives the lesson from the student must evaluate it and convey the results of this evaluation to the student. Reteaching and relearning may or may not be necessary. If necessary, it must be provided for.[30]**

Even as the University of London program served as a precedent for the modern Open University, Professor Houle notes, the University of London also served as a model for the University of South Africa.

This program also accepted the concept that a university degree could be earned basically by extension studies, relying heavily upon the correspondence method.[28]

**Third World Nations**

There is no major country where home study is not used in some way. The University of Delhi, India, has opened a broad range of correspondence programs. In Mexico, where the population has jumped since 1946 from 20 to 60 million, the government uses correspondence studies to supplement residence instruction. Only recently, the government of the Republic of Colombia requested special assistance in setting up correspondence programs from the U.S. Office of Education.

Whether one looks at advanced technological societies such as the United States, England and Russia, the third world nations such as India and Mexico, or at newly emerging countries such as Zambia and Ghana, there is substantial and increasing recognition of the *effectiveness of home study.*

## FOOTNOTES

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